

Rev. Dr. Neale

REV. DR. NEALE'S
ELECTION SERMON,

DELIVERED JANUARY 8, 1852.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE S. BOUTWELL,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR HENRY W. CUSHMAN,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

AT THE

ANNUAL ELECTION, JANUARY 8, 1852.

BY REV. ROLLIN H. NEALE, D. D.

Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Boston.

BOSTON:

DUTTON & WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS,

No. 37, Congress Street.

1852.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Alternates

<https://archive.org/details/religiousliberty00neal>

261.72
N 259r

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Jan. 9, 1852.

ORDERED, That Messrs. Andrews of Montague, Loring of Andover, and Small of Truro, be a Committee to present the thanks of this House to the Rev. ROLLIN H. NEALE, D. D., for the Sermon delivered by him on Thursday last, before the Executive and the two branches of the Legislature of this Commonwealth, and ask a copy for the press.

LEWIS JOSSELYN, CLERK

S E R M O N .

ROMANS XIV: 4.

WHO ART THOU THAT JUDGEST ANOTHER MAN'S SERVANT ? TO HIS OWN MASTER
HE STANDETH OR FALLETH.

It was said of our Saviour that he knew what was in man ;—and the Scriptures, in their perfect adaptedness to human nature in all the varied circumstances and relations of life, evince a similar proof of their divine origin. The legislator and statesman can take no more effectual means to qualify themselves for their important duties, their complex and vast responsibilities, than by consulting the Sacred Oracles. Those governments which are formed after the Scripture model, and which bear the closest conformity to the principles and spirit of revelation, are found on trial best adapted to the character and wants of mankind, and consequently are the most prosperous and enduring.

Religious Liberty, the principle involved in the text, is a prominent doctrine in the teachings of Christ and his Apostles. It is adapted to the well-being of man in any circumstances ; even among the rudest nations, and in the darkest periods of human history. What results, therefore, may we not anticipate from its practical operation among a

people, where, as with us, Christianity has already obtained a footing; where there are so many safeguards against the influence of error, and such numerous and ready means for arriving at a knowledge of the true God.

THE BEARING OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ON OUR OWN NATIONAL PROSPERITY, is the topic, which may occupy, not unprofitably, the present hour.

By religious liberty we mean the privilege of worshiping God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Its principle is, that while we are under obligation to be good and peaceable citizens, to obey magistrates, and submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, no human authority may interfere with our relations to the Creator;—that for our faith and practice, so long as we do not trench upon the legitimate sphere of civil government, we are responsible only to Him who has exclusive dominion of the soul;—that in those thoughts and feelings and actions which we regard as essential to the enjoyment of the divine favor and the attainment of eternal life, no human eye may watch us, no human arm control us, no human tribunal summon us to account.

It must be so from the very nature of the case. Religion is strictly an individual affair. Every man must here think and feel, act and answer, for himself. Neither guilt nor holiness is communicable by bargain, barter, or descent. Neither magistrate nor priest, minister nor layman, can stand before the

Creator as the spiritual representative of another. The sphere of our religious emotions is a sacred enclosure, where each individual is to be left alone with God. The sanctuary of the soul is a hallowed retirement, to be entered, and entered only, by the High Priest of our profession. This principle is a conspicuous and distinguishing feature of the Christian faith. Even under the Jewish economy, formidable barriers existed in the path of the worshiper. Holy vestments, sacred places, and priestly functions, stood up with frowning and chilling aspect between the hearts of the people and the life-inspiring influence of the Divine presence. But now a new and a living way has been consecrated by the blood of Jesus, in which every sincere suppliant may have communion with Heaven. Wherever we are, in society or in solitude, on the ocean or on the land; in the desert, the city or the mountain top, God is not far from every one of us. The incense of an honest heart can rise to the Omniscient One, in the humblest circumstances of devotion, as acceptably as beneath the lofty cathedral dome; and even when the lips move not, and the eyes, weighed down with sickness and sorrow, are closed, the heart, gratefully devout, may throb its silent adoration to the Deity, and breathe forth as true a spirit of prayer and praise as if it mingled its tones with the melody of thousands, and bowed ostentatiously before an imposing altar and a consecrated priest. Such is the doctrine and this the spirit of our holy religion; and yet the nations of the earth have been strangely slow in understanding either the one or

the other. Even Christian communities, mistaking the sphere and the limits of their responsibility, have conscientiously scourged and branded, banished and burned, the heretic. Strange as it now seems to us, history abounds with instances where the secular power has thought itself fulfilling a divinely appointed mission,—exercising a high and holy prerogative in putting men and women to death for the good of souls and for the honor of Christ. These views are not now carried out so rigorously as at former periods; still their withering and deadly influence is felt in almost every land. Ours is the only government where religion is entirely dissevered from the state; the only country in which the civil magistrate, should contending sects come to him with their feuds and difficulties, would be required to say with the deputy of Achaia, not scornfully but reverently, “If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, reason would that I should bear with you, but if it be a question of words and names and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge in such matters.”

Such is the religious liberty enjoyed in these United States. It is derived directly from the King in Zion. It is not regarded as a matter of toleration, but a heaven-descended and inalienable right. Saul is an Episcopalian, and Cephas a Presbyterian, and Gaius a Baptist, and Demas a Roman Catholic, because, in the exercise of their own judgment, and under, we trust, a sense of responsibility to God, they so choose to be. The people of every nation, Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in

Mesopotamia ; and every religious sect, whatever may be their faith, with the merest shred of a creed, or with the most motley and far-spread patch-work of a superstitious ritual ; whether Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Turk ;—they may here worship God, each in his own way, without molestation or fear from any human agency. If the Chinese choose to erect a Buddhist temple in California, or in any other part of the Union, they will meet with no trouble ; and no special attention will be given to their work or their worship farther than as they may be, for a while, matters of curiosity. Every man may sit under his vine and under his fig-tree and none shall make him afraid.

Persecution may indeed exist without brandishing deadly weapons over the head of the supposed errorist. It may follow its victim with suspicion and scorn. It may turn upon him the demoniac glare of anger, and breathe venom from its lips. But this spirit, we have reason to hope, is fast disappearing from among us ; or, if it lingers in some quarters and occasionally lifts up its horrid form, it is looked upon with general disgust as a base outrage upon humanity, and the grossest violation of the laws of God. Such is our liberty. It is worth treasures and blood, and there are those in other lands who would gladly pay and are paying this great price for it. But we were free born. It is a heritage which has descended to us from the Pilgrim Fathers, who, in the language of the gifted poetess,

“Have left unstained, what here they found,
Freedom to worship God.”

What then is the practical bearing of religious liberty upon our happiness and prosperity as a nation?

In the first place, it is the parent and guardian of mental liberty. Independence of thought on one subject leads to independence of thought on others. Especially is this true in reference to religion. If there are restraints here, the whole soul is in bondage; and if there is freedom here, then are we free indeed. One may be in poverty or in prison and suffer a thousand disabilities, and be "a man for a' that:" but if he allows his conscience to be in the keeping of another, he is a slave of the most menial kind. There is nothing left in him that can give strength or dignity to a human being; no individual character or noble endeavors, or lofty aspirations. The glory has departed.

There have been times in the history of nations, nor have those times entirely passed away, when religious restrictions were laid upon the intellect as well as upon the conscience. Men were not allowed to think, or at least to express their thoughts, without having first ascertained whether they were in harmony with the popular creed, and the prescribed faith. It is recorded of the Alexandrian fathers that in their honest intention to develop the true sense of Scripture, they inserted a punctuation mark after the word *&ν*, in the third verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of John. The conscientious Chrysostom was greatly alarmed at this proceeding, and denounced it as rank heresy. Epiphanius, still

more zealous, declared it an act of blasphemy, and a sin against the Holy Ghost. Excitements rose high in the theological world. Wise heads combined to stay the spreading evil. And thus, on account of a single dot, the perilous work of punctuating the inspired volume was delayed for years. A similar spirit of hostility to free thought crippled the energies of philosophers and scholars, and spread over the earth the darkness of a thousand years. Strong and active minds then existed. There were giants in those days. But they were doomed to walk only in the go-carts of despotism. They were occupied with the most profitless inquiries. Not daring to rise up in conscious majesty and pursue their work in the open face of day, they burrowed in the obscurity of convents and cloisters, and wasted on puerile conceits the powers that were designed for discovery and progress. Preachers and authors wrote with the fear of the censorship, or the Index of prohibited books, before their eyes. The shadow of the pillory or of the grim inquisition fell, through their study windows, sadly and ominously upon the page that should have been dedicated to freedom, to truth, and to God. But no such bit or bridle is imposed on us; and never can be. Our philosophers and learned men may push their investigations as far as they please; no prince or prelate can harm them. They may make, or think they make, discoveries in science that are wonderful and startling; and they may announce them to the world and to the church ever so boldly; no son or successor of St. Dominic will raise his iron hand, nor bend

upon them a frowning brow. If some of their theories seem to come athwart the Bible, be it so. The fate of the Tuscan philosopher, often so plaintively deprecated, they have no occasion to fear,—however much it might in some instances be deserved. Our men of genius may exert themselves to the utmost, may range the wide creation, and unlock, if they can, the mysteries of nature. Their acquisitions may equal their pretensions even. They may

“ Know all learning and all science know,
And all the subtle, nice affinities
Of matter trace, its virtues, motions, laws,
And most familiarly and deeply talk
Of mental, moral, natural, divine,
Leaving the earth at will, may soar to heaven,
And read the glorious visions of the skies,
And gaze far back into the awful depths of Deity.”

No obstructions will be thrown in their luminous path. Our transcendentalists may indulge in imaginative theories and keen speculations, and with looks of wondrous wisdom, speak of the “absolute,” and the “infinite,” and the “innate,” as familiar things, intelligible and palpable to their every sense. They may put forth those long reaches of thought which pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon, or dive into the bottom of the deep, where fathom-line can never touch the ground, and drag up drowned honor by the locks! Our policy and our safety consist in simply standing out of their adventurous way, and giving them as wide a range as possible. The astronomer may scan the heavens to the utmost sweep of his telescope; the

geologist may grope in the bowels of the earth, and talk freely and learnedly of the countless ages through which its strata have been slowly churned and curdled; the mathematician may bend over problems reaching back to periods equally remote, and in the fervor of scientific enthusiasm seem to forget the Mosaic account of creation. What then? We shall neither send them to the stake from an insane fear; nor throw away our bibles in as insane a credulity. We have no apprehension that there will ever be discovered a want of harmony between the true out-speaking of nature, and the clear, unerring and rightly-understood voice of inspiration. An intelligent faith in the word of God is too strong, too deeply rooted and grounded in everlasting truth, to be timorous of man or of human science. Religion rejoices in the mental freedom she inspires, and of whose blessings she herself is no stinted recipient.

The influence of this freedom is not confined to the study of the scholar. It does not expend itself in mere theory. It is something practical. We all share of its blessings. It is felt in every department of society, and changes the entire character and destiny of nations. Those Europeans who first settled on the banks of the St. Lawrence, were the legitimate offspring of church and state. Nursed from infancy in the lap of power, fed with artificial stimulants, and trained to martial rule and discipline, they languished for want of vital sap and energy: whereas the colonies from England, our Puritan forefathers, seeking refuge from oppression, driven from their

firesides and their homes, tossed on the billows of the ocean, and left at length, outcast and neglected, amid the storms of winter and the yell of savages, beset with difficulties on every side, but still strong in native vigor and self-confiding courage, grew yet more strong with the conflicts and the buffettings of life, and exhibited in their character all the native might, the stern endurance and hardihood, of their own coast and clime. They had thrown off their shackles and come out of prison. Hatred of all civil and spiritual domineering had become with them a ruling passion. The spirit of nonconformity had taken possession of their souls, and the love of liberty was sublimed in them to a fiery essence. They were resolved to be free. Hence their sinewy limbs, and thoughtful brows, and energetic purposes. And what but the same spirit has poured around the abodes of their descendants the multiplied comforts of social and domestic life, and stirred up to unwonted activity and enterprise the teeming millions of our population, and awakened an inventive power among our artisans, our manufacturers, and agriculturists, that is daily giving a new impulse to the various branches of industry, so that, as recorded by the ablest, the bitterest and the most anti-American press in all Europe, the United States, at the World's Fair, in every valuable art, in everything for human improvement, so far distanced every competitor, as to leave none else in sight. To what, I ask, is this attributable but to that soul-liberty, in which they occupy an enviable and solitary preëminence among the nations of the earth ?

It is not thus with the South American States. Republics though they are, with a salubrious clime, a fertile soil, and exhaustless mines of gold and silver, they are yet, in all the elements of human power, whether of head or heart, in the quiet pursuits of peace, or the fiercer conflicts of war, as dwarfed and inert as Pharaoh's lean kine, and like them, through years of famine or years of plenty, remain gaunt and meagre still. What is wanted is religious freedom. This has a vitalizing power. It arouses men to action, and sets them forward in a career of improvement.

Dangers indeed are to be apprehended from these awakened energies. The practical effect of liberty, depending as it does upon the manner in which it is employed, is diversified in its character, like the vegetation of the earth. Rightly used and trained, it becomes the waving harvest, the rich and abundant fruits of cultivated fields, which fill our garners and pile our boards with plenty. Perverted or suffered to run wild, it presents only thorns and briers ; or, at best, is like the green, yet deceptive ivy, which " hastens the decay it serves to hide, and crumbles into speedier ruin the edifice it was designed to adorn and beautify." A strange progeny is sometimes born even of American freedom. Our genius, like a minister at large, is fruitful of suggestions, and constantly devising new modes of operation. Under its excited influence a thousand uncouth notions and inventions are obtruded upon the public eye. Strange and suspicious theories in science, government, and religion, are broached and propagated through the community. Stars are frequently appearing above

the horizon, promising to guide their followers to a new Bethlehem ; but prove, in the sequel, like the corpse lights of English fable, which pointed only to the graves their discoverers and admirers were soon to occupy. Though Fourier has gone to his Judge, his system lives and has here its list of votaries. The radical and the comeouter are abroad ; the latter has not only come out himself, but is anxious to thrust out Christ and his creed from his neighbor's heart and house. Views adverse to the church and the ministry, and to all organized governments, are freely expressed ; yea, attacks are made on the Bible and Christianity itself. But do we, on this account, wish any other restraints upon the soul than those which Heaven imposes ? Would we, from fear of the tornado, have the winds imprisoned ? Or, to save a toppling edifice or a branching tree here and there, which may be uprooted or overturned by the maddened tempest, would we forego the genial influence which springs from the pulses or even the billows of the atmosphere ? No : We would have the soul free as the elements of nature. Let thought be as unrestrained as the lightning, and come forth in bold thunder-tones—who is afraid ? If it be of men, it will come to naught ; if of God, ye cannot overthrow it. The wildest fanaticism will often die of itself if you but let it alone ; it becomes a raging flame only by ill-judged endeavors to smother the fire. The true and successful way of curing mental as well as bodily diseases is by bringing them to the light and air. Nature is her own physician. Let her roam at pleasure under bright skies and over

green fields, and she will throw off many maladies, which, were she confined to the stifled atmosphere of a sick-room, and doomed to the apothecary's drugs and doses, would prove her death. Thus it is with the soul. It finds health and life by its own freedom. Let argument meet argument, opinion come in conflict with opinion, different systems and theories grapple with each other upon a fair and open field, and the result will be the correction of error, the exposure of folly, and the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness.*

Religious liberty has a direct and strong bearing upon our national stability. Prophecies of failure respecting the republic have been uttered from its origin. The cry of disunion is nothing new nor strange. There are doubtless some circumstances which may justly occasion alarm. It was an intelligent and deep conviction of real danger, that prompted the remark from the patriot of Monticello, "I tremble for my country, when I remember that

* Error and falsehood can thrive only in darkness, whereas truth courts the light. Christianity shrinks from no investigation. She loses nothing by the strictest scrutiny. She never stood on a loftier eminence or more immovable foundations, than at this moment. Men at other times and in other lands have endeavored to blot the Sabbath from existence, and enact a decade to the Goddess of Liberty; but the memorial day of the creation, the resurrection and the redemption, has returned to the calendar in spite of its foes, and there it will stand forever, encircling and gladdening the nations with its hallowed light. The Bible, too, in other times has encountered enemies, as numerous and bitter, and as strangely conscientious; but it has survived every attack, and the assaults of its old and foiled opponents have become its enhanced defence, the thicker and the more prominent bosses on the

God is just." A nation that sets itself against the Lord, that is recreant to its moral obligations, that tramples upon the interests of humanity and the laws of righteousness, cannot long survive. No invading army may burn its cities, or lay waste its fields; no crushing power from without may blot it from existence; it carries within itself the seeds of decay and ruin. Many a strong government has thus been broken into fragments. Many a monarchy, as well as republic, from the midst of outward prosperity and apparent strength, has thus, from its towering height, descended suddenly to the grave, as if smitten by an invisible hand. That this nation, in its prosperity and pride, is exposed to danger, it were hypocrisy and falsehood to deny. The soul, here freed from the restraints of man, is in danger of breaking away from the laws of God. The young men of America, now entering upon the stage of life, and they who are to take part in its checkered drama for the next thirty years, will develop their character, and put forth the energies of

buckler of Jehovah. "The word of God is tried." It has passed through many a fiery ordeal. Science and philosophy, as well as malice and power, have seemed for the moment to threaten its overthrow; but it has come forth divinely protected from every furnace of the destroyer, its truths beaming with the brighter effulgence, and freed only from the fog and fiction and error with which they are liable to be intermingled and shrouded by human imperfection and guilt. The rough scaffolding, indeed, put up by human hands, and which has come to be regarded with superstitious reverence as part of the building, may be torn away; but only to leave the temple of Christian truth, as established by the Lord himself, in more grand and beautiful proportions, with a superstructure standing upon the Rock of ages, and rising in strength and majesty, and attractive splendor, before the eyes of all nations.

the human mind and heart, whether for good or for evil, more fully and more effectively than any generation of men that has ever existed. This innumerable multitude are now on their march. Already the tramp of their footsteps is sounding in our ears. They are the men who will determine the character and complexion of our future history. And if greater care be not taken for their education and moral improvement than has ever heretofore been taken, their purposes and passions will be embodied in the laws and institutions of society, and flame out from all the places of power and influence, in such broad and terrific characters, that not only "whoever runs may read ; but whoever reads will run."

What, then, in these circumstances, are our means of safety ? Shall we rely solely on government ? Will you put this population, fired with the spirit of freedom, into a straight jacket of civil statutes, and compass them about with a constabulary force ? It is, I am aware, a favorite maxim in some quarters, that government is the all-in-all to a people ; that wisdom and goodness can proceed only from organized authority ; that there can be but little intelligence, or morality, or religion even, unless sanctioned by power, and enforced by legal enactments. I believe in no such doctrine. There is a spirit in man, a heart and a conscience, and the inspiration of the Almighty hath given him understanding ; and if allowed the free exercise of these high powers with which he is endowed by the Creator, he will be a better and a safer citizen than

if his soul were cowed down by an Argus-eyed police, and he met at every turn by some prohibitory law. I remember, when a youth, listening to the eccentric Randolph, from the lobby of the senate chamber, in Washington. He frequently boasted that he was the most useful man in Congress, for the reason that he always gave negative votes. He thought there was danger of too much legislation. He believed that liberty was itself a conservative principle ; and that a free people might safely be entrusted with a large amount of *discretionary* power. And is not this a true sentiment ? Certainly. It is illustrated and confirmed by our own history and present condition. We have less of the machinery of government than any other nation, and less need of it than any other ; and one reason is, that, where man is free, where he is left to think and act for himself, where he has an individual character to sustain, and individual responsibilities to meet, a feeling of self-respect, an ambition to deserve the confidence reposed in him, and an intelligent perception of his own interests, will keep him from making war upon society. The spirit of true freedom is ever associated with a regard for public order, and with a respectful and even reverential deference to law. It binds together harmoniously a community of free and independent men. It is like the union of the centripetal with the centrifugal power in nature, which keeps the planets in their steady pathway round the sun : While throwing out a mighty force, it is equally attractive, directing and impelling innumerable and separate bodies

in their onward course, without jar or collision ; or, if notes of discord are occasionally heard, they soon die away amid the sweeter music of the spheres.

Religious liberty tends to a general diffusion of knowledge, so essential to the stability and prosperity of a nation. If learning does not with us rise so high as in some of the nations of Europe, yet what is lost in height is made up in length and breadth. And this is far better, so far as real utility is concerned, than a few brilliant lights in the midst of surrounding darkness, just as our extensive prairies are more valuable for all the purposes of tillage than some Alpine mountain, whose top is lost in the clouds, or dazzling in the rays of the sun, but whose sides are barren and unproductive. Italy may have her distinguished scholars, a few individuals, preëminent in taste and refinement. But how many of her population know not their right hand from their left ! Scarcely a dozen papers are published in all that classic land, and not half the people, I suppose, are capable of reading even them : Whereas, in the United States, the various avenues of light to the public mind are open. The press is free from unnatural surveillance and restraint, and is sending out its periodicals, and spreading its sheets all over the land. Above four hundred millions of copies are annually distributed ; and, how seldom do you find a born and bred American, whether riding in his coach, or drawing a hand-cart, who does not read the “papers.” Many, it is true, are scarcely worth reading, and the character and spirit

of some of them are more suited to the cities of the plain, and the day when Lot fled out of Sodom, amid the avenging fires of Heaven, than to this free republic, in the latter half of the nineteenth century. But the greater portion are adapted to instruct the public mind. They constitute a kind of national library, a universal athenaeum, from which, if there issue no very deep streams of thought, there is constantly going forth a broad and refreshing current of general intelligence.

Our Free-School System, also, owes its prosperity, and indeed its existence, to the spirit of religious liberty. Repeated efforts have been made to introduce it into Great Britain, but hitherto without success. The whole body of nonconformists are opposed to it. In the exercise of what they deem a godly jealousy of the established church, they set themselves strenuously against whatever may tend, in their estimation, to enlarge its power. They suspect danger in the "School Bill," and ply the parliament and her majesty with petitions for its defeat. Much as we may sympathize with their motives, we cannot commend their wisdom. We bless God that here the different denominations of Christians have no such fears and jealousies of one another. Sectarianism is, as it ought to be, excluded from our schools. Teachers are selected indiscriminately from the whole community, and the question asked, is, whether they are qualified to instruct our children in the usual branches of a popular education? and not to what church they belong, nor

what are the peculiarities of their religious creed. And it is delightful to see in these schools the children of the rich and the poor,—children whose parents are from every nation, and entertaining, probably, every variety of religious sentiment,—here sitting side by side, knowing no distinctions, and having no rivalry or strife with one another, except for the merit and the rewards of scholarship. Such is the system which, commenced by our fathers in the Mayflower, has been diligently followed up by their children, from generation to generation. By all classes of citizens it is looked upon with satisfaction and pride, as the glory of our Commonwealth. In the immense strides taken by the country in all the paths of progress, since the beginning of the present century, there is no department of life in which the people have manifested a greater interest, and where the signs of improvement are more visible, than in our public schools. It cannot be otherwise, in a healthful state of society. The education of youth has been happily compared to the flowering out of the community. It is to the moral and intellectual world what the outburst of spring is to the natural; with this marked exception: The material creation makes no advance; but only repeats itself, with an exquisite and beautiful uniformity, from year to year; while the powers of the soul are immortal, and susceptible of indefinite improvement.

Religious liberty, also, secures most fully and most effectively to our nation, the influence of the

pulpit. The “Indebtedness of the State to the Clergy,” was ably shown by the gentleman who preceded me in this public service. But it is to the entire separation of the church from the state, and the perfect freedom we enjoy in our religion, that the pulpit is indebted for much of the power for good with which it is here invested. The ministry is not a profession favorable to the acquisition of wealth, nor is it the usual path to political preferment; and it is sometimes said that our general influence in society is less *imposing* than that of the clergy in the days of our fathers. This may be so; and yet be no disparagement to the ministerial office or character. The truth is, that free, republican institutions tend to strip off the pomp and glare of official dignity, and accord respect and honor to men for what they are in themselves. Whatever station an individual may occupy, his influence in society depends essentially on his own personal character. This is specially true of the Christian minister. He may be called “Bishop,” “Archbishop,” or “Cardinal;” the title will avail but little with intelligent people. The more important inquiry will be, Is he an honest man? Is he a faithful shepherd and bishop of souls? Is he like Cowper’s pastor,

“Much impressed himself,
As conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock
He feeds, may feel it too?”

The potent charm which formerly attached to the clerical name and garb, it must be allowed, does not

now exist. Nor is this a matter of regret. It only tends to separate and preserve Christianity from the corrupt and corrupting influence of the world, and to keep unsullied those pure and heavenly robes in which she shall ultimately be presented to the bridegroom. And besides, who does not know that a minister, embosomed in the affections and confidence of his people, is far more efficient for good, than if girt about with the insignia of office and power, with a glittering tiara upon his head, and keys of awful mystery in his hand ? The truths of the everlasting gospel, proclaimed as they are with us from a thousand pulpits in every part of the land, and to tens of thousands of hearers, from the lips of their own chosen teachers, are instilling into the public conscience and the public heart an influence, which, for the preservation of whatever is good and valuable in our country, is infinitely more effective than all the paraphernalia of a standing army. This unpretending yet continuous infiltration of moral and religious truth into the community, through so many and various channels ; this nourishment of the tree by means of its branches spreading themselves afar and freely in the air of heaven, is an inestimable source of national vitality and strength.

More than all ; the Paraclete of the New Testament, the Divine Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father sends to the devout suppliant in the name of Jesus, is the mysterious and glorious medium through which the favor of God is realized

among men, and which is as essential to the permanent prosperity of a nation, as it is to the life and salvation of an individual. But this Spirit is pre-eminently the spirit of freedom. It cannot be embodied in state enactments, nor confined to creeds and forms, nor infused into the soul by any human authority whatsoever. Its sphere of operation is in connexion with spontaneous emotions, personal responsibilities, and individual thought. In re-impressing upon man the image of his Maker, and bringing his thoughts into subjection to the obedience of Christ, it creates within him the greater individuality of character ; it brings him to himself. He is under law, but it is a perfect law of liberty ; liberty of the highest and the purest kind ;

“ ‘Tis liberty of heart,—such as
 Monarchs cannot give, nor all the
 Powers of earth and hell confederate,
 Take away.”

“ It is held by charter,
 And that charter sanctioned sure
 By the unimpeachable and awful oath
 And promise of a God.”

Here, then, is our strength as a nation ; here our defence and safety as individuals. With a free press, and a free school, and a free pulpit, and the unrestrained influence of the Spirit of God upon the free soul, we shall stand forever, firm as the ocean rock, around whose base the waters harmlessly rage, and around whose summit the winds of heaven as harmlessly play.

Government, sustaining no official relation to religion, is, on this account, in a position to be more efficiently aided and strengthened by her power.*

Christianity, moving in her separate and appropriate sphere, entering, as she alone can, into the sanctuary of the soul, and sweetly enforcing the

* Much is said at the present time, about the "*higher law*," by one party, as if men were to follow their individual convictions, regardless of civil government; and by another, as if they were to follow the laws of man, regardless of God. The true philosophy on this subject, it seems to me, may be stated in few words. Government, with us, exists for certain specified purposes; purposes which are clearly defined in the constitutions of the several states, and in that of the Union: and as religion is not one of them, it cannot interfere in spiritual matters, without transcending the limits of its responsibility. In its corporate capacity it has no more to do with religion, than the directors of a bank, or the superintendents of a railway. The legislator and magistrate, in the discharge of their official duties, can consult only the constitution as it is. Fidelity to their specified trust is the law that binds them, and for which they are responsible to an earthly constituency. At the same time, they are men, subjects of the government of God, and amenable at his tribunal. The responsibility of the individual to his Maker, cannot be set aside by any inferior accountability which he may have assumed as an officer. The true statesman will be religiously faithful to his appointed work, and, like Daniel the prophet, so manage the affairs of government, that not the wiliest politician shall be able to find any just occasion against him, in things pertaining to the kingdom; and yet, as by his oath of office he recognizes a higher tribunal and a higher law than man's, he will not perjure himself by disregarding that higher law; but will follow the revealed will of Heaven, though it should lead him, as it did the noble Hebrew at the head of the Chaldean cabinet, into the very den of lions. While he has no right to use his official power to enforce religion, or to accomplish any other purposes aside from those for which he was specially intrusted with authority, he cannot, nevertheless, forget the paramount authority of God over himself, as an individual, without a recklessness of moral character which would disqualify him for any station of influence or honor, either in Heaven or earth. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and one of the most essential elements of true patriotism.

counsels of Heaven upon the inner man, is a mightier element of strength to our national institutions than if she were herself legally allied with the secular power. It is not the religion of the statute book, but that which lives, and moves, and has its being in the renewed heart, that furnishes to society and to government that which they most need—a man, perfect and complete; with an enlightened conscience and a soul of his own: not held under mortgage and rack-rent to corporate authorities, nor left in pawn with ecclesiastical usurpers.

Our government, thus separate from religion, patronizing no sect and proscribing none, has taken the most effectual method of attaching to itself the whole body of the people. However diversified may be our religious views, we all stand on an equal footing in regard to the state. Our country is the common mother of all who live under her laws. None are disowned;—none are thrown from her maternal embrace, because of their religious convictions. We are all her legitimate children:—all equal and acknowledged heirs of the inheritance. It is this family relationship in civil affairs, with our individual freedom in regard to religion, and the satisfaction which thence ensues, which is preserving the nation from those outbreaks and revolutions, so common and so terrific on the eastern continent. The strife of political parties is sufficiently bitter, but there is generally no religious principle or point of conscience involved in their controversies. Hence, however high and menacing party excitement may occasionally rise, it soon subsides;

the thunders sleep and the winds retire. Happily, in the political world as in the natural, the storm is succeeded by a calm, and there comes the clear sunshine after rain. But if religious interests are intermingled with the secular, and the strong arm of civil authority is laid upon the still stronger convictions of the soul, the conflict is deadly. The tempest is continuous and horrible, raining down hailstones and coals of fire. It is like the pouring out of the apocalyptic vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, until they become blood. All parties suffer in the struggle. The oppressor is doomed, sooner or later, to share the fate of his victim. Thus within a few years, we have seen mighty kings hurled from their thrones, long-standing and powerful dynasties scattered in an hour, and the fairest fields of Europe saturated with human gore. Heaven has so ordained it as an act of retributive justice to the persecutor. Thou art righteous, O Lord! which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and of martyrs, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.

There is nothing so difficult to repress, as the religious sentiment. The tyrant may clothe his captive in chains, and lay him low in a dungeon; but it is not so easy a task to bind the free spirit. He may put a seal upon the lips, but not so readily on volition, and thought, and the moral sense. The soul, freer than air, more rapid than light, regards no chains, and is limited to no dungeons. The thoughts that wander through eternity, defy all

bolts and bars, and an awakened conscience, right or wrong, mocks at all created force. There are yet men upon the earth, who will think for themselves. Their souls were not made to be hampered with fetters. You might as well chain the Hellespont as them. You may forge manacles, and erect prisons, and stand at the portal with a pointed bayonet; the immortal spirit will rise in majesty, and inscribe its laws upon society in the more enduring characters. You may evoke the thunders of the Vatican, and pass sentence of excommunication, and threaten them with the vengeance of Heaven in the world to come; they will yet utter their thoughts, and proclaim aloud their irrepressible convictions. Knowledge is power. Love is active. Inspiration cannot but speak the things it has seen and heard. Science may be forced upon her bended knees to recant her heresy of the earth's rotation, "and yet it moves," will come forth in spite of all, from her lips.

"The Spirit cannot always sleep in dust,
 Whose essence is ethereal; you may try to darken
 And degrade it; it may rust dimly awhile,
 But cannot wholly die; and when it wakens
 It will send its fire intensely forth, and higher."

When the "bull of the pope" has fallen on such a mind, or the "edict of a bishop" oppressed it, when the congregational "formulas" have been imposed, or the "presbyterian book of discipline" held it down too closely, when the baptist "articles of faith," or the scruples of the "dear brethren" have abridged it of its liberty, it will stir under its

burden ; it will break down or leap over its safeguards, and scatter all human restraints as quickly as did the Judge of Israel the green withs that bound him.

Hence, of all governments, none stand on so precarious a footing as those which attempt to control religion. They are as vineyards planted on the sides of Etna, where the royal husbandmen gather their clusters of revenue and luxury amid the white ashes of a recent eruption, or while feeling beneath them the first surgings and throes of some new and impending evolution, that shall bury the vine and the vine-dresser, the tax and the tax-gatherer, in the same lava flood. In attempting to repress and stifle the sacred fires which Heaven has enkindled in the soul, you will yourselves be consumed. The strong man shall be as tow, and his work as a spark ; they shall both burn together and none shall quench them.

But it may be asked, Is Christianity herself safe in the hands of the people ? Objections are urged against the “ voluntary system,” on the ground that it tends to infidelity and atheism. Fears have been expressed by our brethren beyond the Atlantic that such would be our fate ;—that religion would ultimately die out, for want of legal safeguards and protection. But what has she ever gained by such protection ? It is a suspicious circumstance that her avowed and bitter enemies have strongly advocated her union with the state. And why do they wish the union ? Rousseau unintentionally pays

Christianity a compliment, by assigning his reason. It is substantially this:—As she came from the hands of Jesus Christ, she is annoying to the nations: she makes assaults upon human character;—she accuses men of sin, and threatens the guilty with a future judgment; and thus creates commotions and divisions among mankind. “Of all *Christian* authors,” he tells us, “the philosopher Hobbes was the only one who fully saw the evil, and dared to propose a union of the two heads of the Eagle, and thus reduce the whole to political harmony.” The evil, according to him, was in the spiritual nature and aggressive power of the gospel. And the remedy was to be found in putting religion under the guardianship of human government. And an effectual remedy it has ever proved! It takes out of Christianity her life and soul, and leaves her as weak and inoffensive as her bitterest enemies could desire: and that, too, without imparting any additional strength to the secular powers. It is a union which

“Not enriches them,
But makes her poor indeed.”

The truth is, that not only is the state the stronger, but Christianity is the purer and the more powerful, when they are suffered to operate apart. It is better for both eagles, if I may borrow the figure, not to unite them in a common head, but to give them a separate and distinct existence, and open to their flight the whole expanse of the horizon. The bird of paradise

can sustain herself upon her own unaided wing. She did so in the first age of the Christian era. The strong arm of government was indeed stretched out;—not, however, to shield the interests of the new religion, but to crush them; for this purpose Christ was crucified, and his disciples driven from city to city, and hunted through synagogue and dungeon and amphitheatre, into a bloody and dishonored grave. But was Christianity thereby extinguished? No: she gathered fresh energies in the sepulchre, and arose with her author, to claim the skies and rule the subjacent earth. From amid perils, imprisonments and deaths, she went forth in the greatness of her strength, to the conquest of the world. But no sooner did she consent to lean upon human aid and power, and to creep for patronage and protection under earthly corselets and coronets, than she ceased to wield the energies of Heaven. When she placed upon her brow the diadem of the Cæsars, she seemed to have acquired additional vigor; there was an apparent glow of health upon her countenance; but it was only the unnatural bloom upon the cheek of consumption, a bright hectic flush, indicating only weakness and decline. The imperial sword, raised in her defence, pierced her to the heart. Seated in the chair of state, arrayed in royal robes, and crowned with fading laurel, she began herself to fade. Rocked to sleep in the cradle of popular favor, she slumbered for ages, and if left solely to the care of kings and queens, would have slept the sleep of death. Were these high

functionaries humbly and gratefully to regard her claims, they might indeed fulfil the beautiful language of the prophet, and become her nursing fathers and her nursing mothers ; but when Christianity is decoyed from her own lofty position, to nestle in the arms of authority, and draw nourishment from the breast of pride and ambition, the deadly poppy and the fatal nightshade are distilled into the milk on which she feeds, and with all the gorgeousness and splendor of her outward adorning, is but a sickly child,

“Sad to view,
Its visage pale and wan.”

If we may rely upon a distinguished geologist, in his “first impressions” of England, a national religion, even at its best estate, is altogether vanity. In the technical language of his profession,—“ It is no longer a living devotion, but a petrifaction, a fossil, existing, it is true, in a fine state of keeping, but still an exanimate stone.” Everywhere and in all circumstances, religion, owing to the evil tendencies of human nature, is liable to degenerate into mere form ; but where the church is allied with the state ; where a religious profession is a passport to worldly preferment ; where a “living” is secured to the officiating clergyman, independent of the voluntary contributions of his hearers ; and where no farther attentions to the flock are expected, than what are requisite to prevent their going in quest of strange pastures, a strong temptation is presented to ambition, to avarice, to sloth and spiritual fraud. And it will generally be found, that the system

which provides a “living” for the shepherd, bequeaths a *dying* to his flock. Human nature must be entirely changed, if, in such circumstances, hypocrisy do not enter the sanctuary of the living God, and lay impious hands upon the horns of the altar.*

Christianity, so far from dying out amid our free institutions, has found here a field specially prepared of God, for her most signal and brilliant triumphs. Had America been discovered before the reformation, before the printing of the Bible, and before those struggles for liberty which had earlier began to agitate the public mind, how different from what they now are would have been the character and prospective destiny of these United States. But God kept this great continent concealed from European adventurers, until a people were prepared to occupy it. An untraversed ocean rolled between it and them, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. No navigator was allowed to land upon these shores, until the sun of the Christian era had reached an elevated point in the eastern horizon, and broken through the mists and darkness which had

* When the English Puritans, in the time of Cromwell, became supreme in the state, they passed a resolution in Parliament, prompted, doubtless, by motives of piety, that no person should be admitted into the public service, until the house were satisfied of his real godliness. The result was as might have been expected; men who cared for no religion, rushed into the church, and those good people, who, when proscribed and persecuted, had obtained a deservedly high reputation for sanctity, now found themselves mixed up with, and jostled and overpowered by, a motley multitude of traffickers, money-changers and office-seekers, whom Christ would have driven from his temple, with a whip of small cords.

gathered around it in its ascension, so that when this new earth arose from chaos, it was greeted at once by great lights which God had placed in the firmament, and whose genial rays, we trust, will continue to shine upon our hills and valleys with undiminished purity and brightness, to the end of time.

The manner in which emigration from other lands has been at one time retarded, and at another hastened, evinces the same all-wise and beneficent regard to the character which this nation should ultimately form. "What hath God wrought," was the first message sent by the telegraph, as if from Heaven itself to this people. "I the Lord have given you wealth and power, mountains of iron and valleys of gold, a boundless territory and a free government; I have kept back the hordes of Europe until you could consolidate the foundations of your free institutions, and prepare your magazines of light for these ignorant millions; I have added the ocean steamer, the railway, the steam printing press, and the telegraph, as ye have been able to bear the stress and the storm of their influence. Employ, then, all these for my glory and the establishment of my kingdom."

The sceptic may say, all this has so happened, and attribute it only to blind chance; but thoughtful minds cannot avoid looking beyond these intermediate agencies to a higher source. Above the wheels and pulleys and crossbeams of second causes, and within the reservoir of human industry and mortal skill, they recognize, as the controlling force of the complicated machinery, the presence of Him

who is wonderful in counsel and mighty in working; and gratefully exclaim,—This is the Lord! We have waited for him;—This is our God! We will rejoice and be glad in his salvation.

One reason why Palestine was chosen of God to be the great theatre of human redemption, where the ministry of prophets and apostles, and of Christ himself, should be exercised, was its central position. Whatever was there said and done, was proclaimed as upon the housetops, and the sound thereof went out to every land. Ships were passing and repassing from its coast, to all the prominent places on the Mediterranean. Caravans, richly laden, were often seen wending their way from Egypt to Persia, and still farther to the East, where lay the wealth and splendor of India. Thus when, in the fulness of time, Christianity arose, the way was prepared for the widest diffusion of her light. A similar position is occupied by the United States, not only in reference to the western continent, but to the population of the world. The great body of the people of Asia are collected in masses on her eastern coast, upon the shores of the Pacific; and that of Europe on her western, along the borders of the Atlantic. America, extending as she now does to both oceans, is in the near proximity of them all. She can stretch out her arms and make her influence felt over the entire globe. And is this high position assigned her, think you, simply that she may become a great and wealthy people;—the commercial emporium of the world? Is she to hold out in her full hands only patent steam-reapers, the curiously made lock, or the deadly revolver? Is her

commerce only to add to an already overflowing treasury? Is she to use God's ocean only as a road for the transportation of cotton and tobacco and New England rum? No. The great sea where go the ships, was not made to be a mere theatre of worldly enterprise, but to subserve the higher purposes of benevolence and love. Its winds and waves are to waft, to every shore, the truths and principles, the hopes and the joys of Christianity. It is a highway of emerald and sapphire for the footsteps of the Lord of Hosts. Christ is yet, as in the days of his flesh, to walk triumphantly upon the waters, and display his wonders in the deep. The multiplied facilities which are now enjoyed for traversing sea and land; the roads of iron which bind together the most distant parts of the continent;—the rivers, grooved by the finger of God;—the oceans poured from the hollow of his hand;—the ships which plough their way through the stormiest sea and in the darkest night; the wires, full of vitality and clinking with thought, that are spreading their electric network in every direction, are the great arteries, and nerves, and life-blood of human sympathy, designed not merely to facilitate the intercourse of nations, and bring the whole human family into a loving brotherhood, but to reanimate the world with a new life, to unite the earth with Heaven, and to recover man to the love and service and companionship of his Creator.

But to say nothing of the influence which may be sent abroad, this country is the chosen asylum of all nations. If Japheth has fulfilled the prediction, uttered while the earth was yet moist and reeking

from the deluge: If he has hitherto occupied the tents of Shem; he is here requiting his brother for the usurpation and encroachment, by inviting all the tribes of Japheth's gray stock, and smuggling Ham, and luring Shem, by the advantages of art, science and traffic, to be the occupants of his own broad tent. We may suffer somewhat, temporarily, from this influx of foreigners; but I have no sympathy with the oft-repeated cry, that the sun of our liberty, civil or religious, will thus fall from the heavens, and the night of the middle ages spread its clouds of darkness and gloom over these fair fields.* The shadow on the great dial of human destiny moves not backward. Vassalage and serfdom shall never return. There is too wide a diffusion of the morning light, for bat-eyed superstition to resume her reign: and the light which is here shedding forth its beams, *is* that of the morning, not of the close of day.

America is called upon, by the providence of God, to put forth the impulses of a generous humanity. Her's is no ordinary mission. The

* Japheth, though he may not, in all cases, find angels in the strangers he entertains, will be ultimately a gainer by his hospitality. Those nations which now exert the widest influence, are all the product of mixed races; while those that lie dormant and altogether unfelt in the world, are such as have kept their blood and their thoughts untainted with foreign admixture. It required the original Briton, the Saxon and the Norman, to make the modern Englishman. In the American character, there is coming to be not only a union of these, but a still farther infusion of varied elements from all nations. Let these materials be moulded and controlled by Christianity, and there will spring up a race infinitely superior in individual prowess and length of life, to those who trod the earth with giant steps in the first age; men of high moral stature, and who, in good words, and noble thoughts, and worthy deeds, shall survive a thousand years.

Indian and the African have yet unfulfilled claims upon her justice. The down-trodden of her own land, and the captives now crowded in Austrian prisons, are crying to her for relief. She cannot be heedless of these appeals. She would be unfaithful to her character and past history, if indifferent to oppression and suffering in any part of the world. When the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle were visited with famine, the warm heart of America beat generously in their behalf. Like the High Priest of Israel, she went as with a golden censer, and stood between the living and the dead, until the plague was stayed.

And when the nation of classic memory and fame was contending against fearful odds for its liberty and life, there was here, as there ever will be with a free and Christian people, a general, irrepressible and spontaneous outburst of sympathy. Rich men poured forth their treasures. Poetry sung the praises of liberty. Religion offered prayer to God. And a lofty eloquence rang through our halls of legislation. So it should ever be. It is a memorial in man, of his celestial origin and attainable destiny. There is a nobleness of soul, a grandeur of sentiment, a disinterestedness of heart, which soars as far above all consideration of self, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Its impulses and throbings are felt across oceans and continents, and they are not only the occasion of the sweetest emotions that ever arise in the human bosom, but the mightiest power for good a nation can wield:—more effective by far, in aid of crushed and bleeding humanity, than if accompanied by a forest of

bristling bayonets. Christian compassion itself, more potent than an armed force, is only weakened by threats of violence and declarations of war. The time, I believe, has come, at least in the history of this country, when the voice of wisdom, experience and love shall avail more for the deliverance of the oppressed, and the prosperity of the free, than the heaviest ordnance of the battle-field;—when the expression of truthful ideas, the manly utterance of honest convictions, founded on the eternal principles of justice and of right,—the sending forth of the Bible and the missionary of the cross, shall cause greater joy to the nations, and be more startling even to the despots of the world, than if confronted by the roar of artillery and the blast of trumpets. This is the honor; this the sceptre of power conferred upon us by the God of Heaven. Let us employ it, not only in behalf of nations struggling for freedom;—but, what is a higher glory still, for the moral regeneration of mankind. May we never part with our birthright. **LET NOT THE SHIELD OF THE MIGHTY BE VILELY CAST AWAY.***

Permit me now to tender to His Excellency the usual congratulations. In addition to the respect accorded you as a man, by all parties and denominations, we honor you as the Chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth: a state which, though of limited geographical dimensions, justly ranks with the highest in the land, for the intelligence and enterprise, the enlarged patriotism and moral worth, of her citizens. We honor the stand you have taken

in the cause of popular education, and your sentiments of devotion to the Union. The labors and responsibilities of the office you sustain, are doubtless onerous and trying ; especially in times of high political excitement, and among a people exercising an uncommon liberty of conscience, and, not unfrequently, a vexatious freedom of speech.

But, sir, it is by these things men live, and a prophet of old has declared, that “it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.” However, that I be not further tedious, I will conclude my remarks to your Excellency, somewhat in the language, though I trust not in the spirit, of the Roman orator :—“ While by thee we enjoy quietness, and while worthy deeds are done unto this people by thy providence, we shall accept it always, in all places, with all thankfulness.”

In behalf of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor, and the members of the Executive Council, we would invoke not only the spirit of tenderness, but that of sound wisdom and firm integrity. This is indispensable to a faithful discharge of the responsible and often painful duties of your office. In the administration of public justice, with the discretionary exercise of the pardoning power, the character of the individual has to be merged in that of the magistrate, who, while he sympathizes with the sufferer and with the guilty, is bound to sustain the majesty of the law. He cannot yield to the clamors of the socialist, nor to the pleadings of affection and friendship, nor yet to the yearnings of his own heart-felt compassion, without being crimi-

nally recreant to the solemn obligations which Heaven has imposed. While faithful to your high trust, gentlemen, you will receive, as you will deserve, the respect and support of an enlightened community.

*Gentlemen of the Senate,
and of the House of Representatives :*

We welcome you to the posts of honor and of toil to which you have been elevated by the free and voluntary suffrages of your fellow-citizens. It is an interesting feature in our institutions, illustrated by the assembly before me, that men from all the different professions in life, and entertaining various religious opinions, are alike eligible to the halls of legislation, and may take an equal part in the deliberative councils of the Commonwealth. May the session, upon which you are now entering, be distinguished for efficiency and harmonious action. It is due to the character of the people you represent, and to the history and reputation of Massachusetts, that her Legislature should ever be composed of high-minded and honorable men, who know how to utter their honest convictions with wisdom and firmness, and yet with candor and courtesy.

And, gentlemen, while engaged in conducting the affairs of human government, may you remember that you are yourselves under the government of God, and amenable at his solemn tribunal.

And now, to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God our Saviour, be honor and glory, dominion and power forever ! Amen.

APPENDIX.

THE mission of M. Kossuth, now in this country, and his doctrine respecting American intervention in the affairs of Hungary, are producing no little excitement in the public mind. That there should be a deep and widespread sympathy with the people in whose behalf he so earnestly pleads, is perfectly natural and Christian-like. The patriotic and eloquent appeals of the illustrious exile, the pictures which he so graphically and truthfully draws, of the unfortunate yet heroic Magyars, struggling for freedom, for religious freedom, nay, for their very existence, we know, from our own feelings, must reach and stir the inmost depths of the soul. "Here I stand before you," he says, "to plead the cause of these, your less fortunate brethren; the cause of humanity;—I may succeed, or I may fail; but I will go on pleading with that faith of martyrs, by which mountains are moved; and I may displease you, perhaps; still I will say with Luther—*May God help me, I can do no otherwise.*" Noble minded man! His appeals will not be in vain. Thousands of hearts in this free republic, and in other lands, will beat warmly and effectively for his oppressed nation. The favor of Heaven will be invoked and enlisted in their behalf. When we think of the treachery and butchery which this people have suffered from the Georgeys and Haynaus of Austrian despotism, the imprisonments and scourgings inflicted upon innocent men and defenceless women, we feel that if the cause of Hungary is not sufficient to enlist the sympathy and support of good men, "then," to use the burning words of its mightiest champion, "is there no just cause and no justice on earth. The blood of no new Abel will move toward Heaven. The

genius of charity and Christian love will mournfully fly the earth : a heavy curse will fall upon morality ; oppressed men will despair, and only the Cains of humanity walk proudly, with impious brow, about the ruins of liberty on earth ! ” But the favor of God and of Christian men is shown by the assertion of correct principles, by the force and pressure of moral sentiment, by the keen weapons of truth, and the piercing light of intelligence and love. We have seen, with emotions of satisfaction and gratitude to God, the expressions of sympathy and good will, which, from multitudes in the different Christian nations, have followed the steps of the Hungarian chieftain to his Turkish exile. We feel a just pride that, by the interposition of an American President and an American Congress, our own flag of protection and freedom floated over him, on the distant waters of the Bosphorus. We admired the more than Roman triumph which he achieved during his short visit to England. “ He landed on the southern coast, not far from where William of Normandy, nearly eight centuries before, had landed ; not far from where, nineteen centuries ago, Julius Cæsar had landed also ; but William on the field of Hastings, and Cæsar in his adventurous expedition, made no conquest comparable in grandeur to that achieved by the unarmed and unattended Hungarian.” A similar demonstration of popular enthusiasm greeted his arrival on our shores. He is the nation’s guest. His mission is successful. He need ask no more. The country has espoused his cause, and without engaging in a belligerent enterprise, will send him forth to his father-land, armed with the most efficient weapons of success which the nation can proffer. We would say to our guest, in the language of our esteemed Senator in Congress,*—“ Be content with the outgushing sympathy which you now so marvellously inspire every-

* Hon. Charles Sumner.

where throughout this wide-spread land, and may it strengthen your soul ! Trust in God, in the inspiration of your cause, and in the great future, pregnant with freedom for all mankind. But respect our ideas, as we respect yours. Do not seek to reverse our traditional, established policy of peace. *Do not, under the too plausible sophism of upholding non-intervention, provoke American intervention on distant European soil.* Leave us to tread where Washington points the way." This is the spirit, and this the doctrine, which meets our most hearty approval, and will, we doubt not, be responded to by the great body of the American people. We have been taught from our infancy, as a nation, to venerate the character of Washington, and we are now reaping the rich fruit of his instruction. It is well for us that love for him and his recorded sentiments has grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength. He was obviously raised up of God to be the father of his country, and was led, in his farewell address, to speak to us as with the voice of inspiration. His counsel to "observe good faith and justice toward all nations," and yet to "steer clear of entangling alliances with any and every portion of the foreign world," is not only adapted to the prosperity of our republic, but commends itself still more for its perfect harmony with the principles and spirit of our holy religion. Christianity will not indeed ask with a cold, unfeeling, Cain-like selfishness,—Am I my brother's keeper? She recognizes a brother in every human being, and regards every act of kindness to the stranger, the sufferer and the oppressed, as done to the Lord himself. But she wields a mightier power than that of the sword. The weapons of her warfare are not carnal. The greaves of the armed warrior and garments rolled in blood, constitute no part of her appropriate costume. She goes forth to the achievement of her victories in majestic simplicity, with the accents of truth upon her lips, and the love of

God and the love of man, warm and glowing in her heart, and is thus destined, in her onward progress, to usher in the bright and joyous day of universal freedom to the nations.

By the good providence of God, America is placed at a happy distance from the belligerent nations of the earth. The volcanoes of war may surge and burst on the eastern continent, but scarcely a cinder can reach our shores. We should neither honor God, nor do good to our fellow men, by seeking out the yawning crater, or plunging into the boiling lava. Heaven, whose guardian angels have watched over us from the first, has, we trust, designed us for a destiny more worthy of immortal beings. Our continued existence as a free republic, the thrift and enterprise of our citizens, the comforts of social and domestic life which everywhere prevail, the safety with which more than half the population go to bed at night with unbolted doors, our cities springing up as by magic on seaboard and inland, smiling villages peering out from every valley and upon every hill-top, groups of happy children on their way to school, the hallowed influences of the Sabbath and the sanctuary, and the enterprises of benevolence and piety which are here in successful operation for diffusing the blessings of the gospel of Christ throughout the world,—are enabling us to fulfil our highest mission as a nation, and to discharge most effectively our fraternal obligations to the family of man. We are in a goodly ship. The interests of humanity in every land, and for centuries to come, will depend very much upon our safety and continued prosperity. If, in the tempest of nations, some are cast adrift, and are found on the wide waters, floating on planks, or clinging to the vessel's sides, we are prepared to take them aboard. But whether we shall hazard ship and cargo, and all the great purposes for which the voyage was undertaken, for the sake of deciding a battle on the high seas, is a question which our experienced pilot at

the helm, the far-seeing Secretary of State, will take time to think of:—"YES, HE WILL THINK OF THAT."

Our nation, in its maturity and strength, has doubtless duties devolving upon it, far greater than were demanded in its weakness and infancy. When the foundations of the republic were laid, we were as a child in the cradle. The large dress of our unoccupied territories hung loose about our puerile limbs. We have now grown up to manhood. We have left the nursery, and must henceforth take our stand among the "Powers" of the earth. Nor would we shrink from any responsibilities belonging to our new position. A nation, no more than an individual, should live to itself. No intelligent and well-disposed citizen of the United States would wish to see his country degraded to the "rotting vegetation of a Paraguay, or to the mummy existence of a Japan or a China." Progress is her duty and her privilege. Let the nation pursue the bright pathway marked out for her, by the God of nature, of providence and grace, and there is no limit to her improvement. Our "ancestral tree" will spread out its giant branches aloft and afar, while multitudes are reposing under its shadow, and partaking of its fruits. Let us religiously correct our faults; let us free ourselves from the just charge of inhumanity and oppression; let the republic continue to develop its natural resources; let mental and moral culture shed its healthful influence around our youth; let the word of the Lord sound out from our pulpits, and the light of a pure Christianity be reflected over the nations, and no higher object of ambition,—no brighter prospect of true greatness and glory,—can be presented before us in the present world.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS - URBANA



N30112901263612A